

IS ANN

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by those learning the Gaelic Language.

By I. M. MOFFATT-PENDER.

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Seonaid MacChleinnich

Arto 3.

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There are two forms of the verb **to be** with which learners of Gaelic quickly become familiar. These two forms are best explained by examples.

1. **THA** (a bheil ? ; chan eil ; nach eil ? ; gu bheil ; mur eil).

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (a) Tha an loch an so : | <i>The loch is here.</i> |
| (b) Tha an cù mòr aig an dorus : | <i>The big dog is at the door.</i> |
| (c) Tha an t-aran air a' bhòrd : | <i>The bread is on the table.</i> |
| (d) Tha am fiadh anns a' bheinn : | <i>The deer is on the hill.</i> |
| (e) Tha a' chraobh anns a' ghàradh : | <i>The tree is in the garden.</i> |
| (f) Tha a' bheinn àrd : | <i>The hill is high.</i> |
| (g) Tha an t-each sgith : | <i>The horse is tired.</i> |
| (h) Tha am maide briste : | <i>The stick is broken.</i> |
| (i) Tha am bàta a' seòladh : | <i>The boat is sailing.</i> |
| (j) Tha an t-iasg a' snàmh : | <i>The fish is swimming.</i> |
| (k) Tha na daoine ag coiseachd : | <i>The men are walking.</i> |
| (l) Tha a' ghrian a' deàrrsadh : | <i>The sun is shining.</i> |
| (m) Tha latha fliuch ann : | <i>There is a wet day.</i> |
| (n) Tha an t-uisge ann : | <i>There is rain (raining).</i> |
| (o) Tha oidhche mhaith ann : | <i>There is a good night.</i> |
| (p) Tha deagh thìde ann : | <i>There is good weather.</i> |
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(l), (m), (n), (o), (p) are, in the main, with this form of the verb **to be**, invariable).

These are all simple straight-forward sentences, without undue stress or emphasis on either subject or verb. In such cases **THA** is invariably used.

For the *past tense* of these same sentences use **BHA** (an robh ? ; cha robh ; nach robh ? ; gu robh ; mur robh).

For the *future tense* of these same sentences use **BITHIDH** (am bi ? ; cha bhi ; nach bi ? ; gum bi ; mur bi).

2. **IS** or **IS E** (an e ? ; chan e ; nach e ? ; gur e ; mur e).

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| (a) Is e an loch a tha an so : | <i>It is the loch that is here.</i> |
| (b) Is e an cù mòr a tha aig an dorus : | <i>It is the big dog that is at the door.</i> |
| (c) Is e an t-aran a tha air a' bhòrd : | <i>It is the bread that is on the table.</i> |
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| (f) Is i a' bheinn a tha àrd : | <i>It is the hill that is high.</i> |
| (g) Is e an t-each a tha sgìth : | <i>It is the horse that is tired.</i> |
| (h) Is e am maide a tha briste : | <i>It is the stick that is broken.</i> |
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| (j) Is e an t-iasg a tha a' snàmh : | <i>It is the fish that is swimming.</i> |
| (k) Is iad na daoine a tha ag coiseachd : | <i>It is the men who are walking.</i> |

- (l) Is i a' ghrian a tha a' deàrrsadh : *It is the sun that is shining.*
- (m) Is fliuch an latha, or Is e latha fliuch a tha ann : *Wet is the day, or It is a wet day there is.*
- (n) Is e an t-uisge a tha ann : *It is the rain there is.*
- (o) Is i oidhche mhaith a tha innte, *It is a good night,*
 or
 Is e oidhche mhaith a tha ann : *It is a good night which is present now.*
- (p) Is e deagh thide a tha ann : *It is good weather which is (present).*

The *past tense* of **IS** is **BU**, and the *past tense* of **IS E** is **B' E** (am b' e ? ; cha b' e ; nach b' e ? ; gum b' e ; mur b' e).

Sentences beginning with **IS E** express direct emphasis on the subject, as distinct from any other possible article or thing.

Sentences beginning with **IS** followed by an adjective express emphasis on the adjective.

The preceding sentences thus indicate that

- (a) The *Loch* (and nothing else) is here.
 (b) The *Big Dog* (and nothing else) is at the door.
 (c) The *Bread* is on the table.
 etc., etc.

Note.—There are naturally subtleties or nuances of inference according as to whether or not the **Article** is used before the subject.

Examples of question and answer with foregoing sentences :

- (a) An e so an loch ? Is e : *Is this the loch ? It is.*
 An e loch domhain a tha an so ? *Is it a deep loch that is here ?*
- Chan e—is e loch tana a tha ann : *It is not ; it is a shallow loch.*
- An e an loch a tha an so ? *Is it the loch that is here ?*
 Chan e—is e an abhainn a tha ann : *It is not ; it is the river that is in it (here).*

- (b) An e an cù mór a tha aig an dorus? Chan e—is e an cù beag a tha ann : *Is it the big dog that is at the door? It is not; it is the small dog that is there.*
 An e cù mór a tha ann? Is e : *Is it a big dog that is there? It is.*
 An e so an cù mór? Chan e—is e so an cù beag : *Is this the big dog? It is not; this is the small dog.*
- (c) An e an t-aran a tha air a' bhòrd? Is e : *Is it the bread that is on the table. It is.*
 An e aran a tha ann? Chan e—is e im a tha ann : *Is it bread which is there (in it)? It is not; it is butter which is there (in it).*
 Nach e aran ùr a tha air a' bhòrd? Chan e—is e bonnach ùr a tha air a' bhòrd : *Isn't it new bread that is on the table? It is not; it is a new bannock that is on the table.*

etc., etc.

IS ANN.

Now we come to the third form of the verb **to be**.

Gaelic speakers use this form as often as they use **THA** and **IS E**, but for some inexplicable reason no Gaelic grammarian has clearly explained this usage, and the learner is left unaided to solve the difficulty. In ordinary Gaelic conversation, sentences more frequently begin with **IS ANN** (*an ann?*; *chan ann*; *nach ann?*; . . . *gur ann*; *mur ann*) than with any other words. The native Gaelic speaker who has not studied grammar is quite unaware of this form of speech, and yet it is no exaggeration to say that he *uses* it in *three sentences out of ten*.

This form of the verb **to be** is the crux of the Gaelic language. Let those who are learners master this form and progress becomes rapid; unmastered, "all the voyage of their life

Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

This form is used:

(1) When **Locative** emphasis is desired:

- (a) Is ann an so a tha an loch : *It is here that the loch is.*
 (b) Is ann aig an dorus a tha an cù mór : *It is at the door that the big dog is.*

- (c) Is ann air a' bhòrd a tha an t-aran : *It is on the table that the bread is.*
 (d) Is ann anns a' bheinn a tha am fiadh : *It is on the ben that the deer is.*
 (e) Is ann anns a' ghàradh a tha a' chraobh : *It is in the garden that the tree is.*

We note from the above examples :

- (a) That the Loch is **Here**, and nowhere else.
 (b) That the Big Dog is at the **Door**.
 He is not at the window, nor at the side of house nor any place but at the door.
 (c) That the Bread is on the **Table**.
 It is not in the cupboard nor on the floor nor in the crock —but quite definitely and obviously on the table.
 etc., etc.

(2) When **verbal** emphasis is desired :

- (f) Is ann a tha a' bheinn àrd : *It is high that the hill is ;
or the hill is really high.*
 (g) Is ann a tha an t-each sgith : *It is tired that the horse is.*
 (h) Is ann a tha am maide briste : *It is broken that the stick is*
 (i) Is ann a tha am bàta a' seòladh, *It is (really) sailing that*
 or the boat is.
 Is ann a' seòladh a tha am bàta :
 (j) Is ann a tha an t-iasg a' snàmh, *It is (really) swimming*
 or that the fish is.
 Is ann a' snàmh a tha an t-iasg :
 (k) Is ann a tha na daoine ag cois-eachd, *It is walking that the men*
 or are.
 Is ann ag coiseachd a tha na daoine :
 (l) Is ann a tha a' ghrian a' deàrrsadh, *The sun is (actually)*
 or shining.
 Is ann a' deàrrsadh a tha a' ghrian :
 (m) Is ann a tha an latha fliuch, *It is wet that the day is.*
 Is ann a tha latha fliuch ann *To-day is (really) wet.*
 an diugh :
 (n) Is ann a tha an t-uisge air sgur : *It has stopped raining.*

(o) Is ann a tha oidhche mhaith ann a nis : *It is (really) a good night now.*

(p) Is ann a tha deagh thìde ann : *It is (really) good weather.*

These examples give the ideas of the facts stated being so in reality, in spite of any thoughts of the contrary or of something different being the case.

The *past tense* of this form is **B' ANN** (am b' ann ? ; cha b' ann ; nach b' ann ? ; . . . gum b' ann ; mur b' ann).

Further examples of the very frequent use of **IS ANN** :—

An ann an dé a thàinig sibh ? Is ann : *Was it yesterday that you came ? It was.*

An ann an raoir a chuala sibh an naidheachd ? Chan ann—is ann an diugh a chuala mi i : *Was it last night that you heard the news (story) ? It was not ; it was to-day that I heard it (her).*

An ann còmhla ris an rìgh a bha am prionnsa ? Chan ann—Is ann còmhla ris na saighdearan a bha e : *Was it along with the king that the prince was ? It was not ; it was along with the soldiers that he was.*

An ann a' dol do Leòdhas a tha sibh ? Chan ann—is ann a' dol do Bharraigh a tha mi : *Is it going to Lewis that you are ? It is not ; it is going to Barra that I am.*

Nach b' ann as na Hearadh a thàinig sibh ? B' ann : *Wasn't it from Harris that you came ? It was.*

Nach b' ann do Uibhist a bhuineadh e ? Cha b' ann—b' ann do Bheinnabhaoghla a bhuineadh e : *Wasn't it to Uist that he belonged ? It was not ; it was to Benbecula that he belonged.*

Nach d' thuirt Eachann gur ann do Thirithe a bhuineas e ? Cha d' thuirt—thubhairt e gur ann do Chollá a bhuineas e : *Did not Hector say that it is to Tiree that he belongs ? No—he said that it is to Coll that he belongs.*

Nach ann anns a' chràibh a tha an smeorach ? Chan ann—is ann air a' chreig a tha i : *Is it not in the tree that the thrush is ? No—it is on the rock that it is.*

Nach ann do an Eilean Sgitheanach a bhuineas Seumas Og nan Eilean ? Is ann—is ann do Shléibhte a bhuineas e : *Isn't it to the Island of Skye that Young James of the Isles belongs ? It is ; it is to Sleat that he belongs.*

An additional note of very special value to the learner.

Gaelic has several idiomatic forms which we must use if we wish to express the meaning of equivalent English forms.

In Gaelic we may **not** use or say

| | | |
|---------------|-------|-----------------------|
| Tha e duine | (for) | <i>He is a man.</i> |
| Tha i caileag | (for) | <i>She is a girl.</i> |
| Tha e cù | (for) | <i>It is a dog.</i> |

We must construct the sentence with the prepositional pronoun **ANN**, viz. :

| | | |
|-------------------|----|----------------------------|
| Tha e 'na dhuine | or | Is e duine a tha ann : |
| Tha i 'na caileig | or | Is i caileag a tha innte : |
| Tha e 'na chù | or | Is e cù a tha ann : |

or we may use this emphatic phrase

Is duine e :
Is caileag i :
Is cù e :

Nor may we say

| | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| Tha e an duine | (for) | <i>He is the man.</i> |
| Tha i a' chaileag | (for) | <i>She is the girl.</i> |
| Bha e an cù | (for) | <i>It was the dog.</i> |

We must use **IS** or **BU** with the emphatic form of the personal pronoun, viz. :

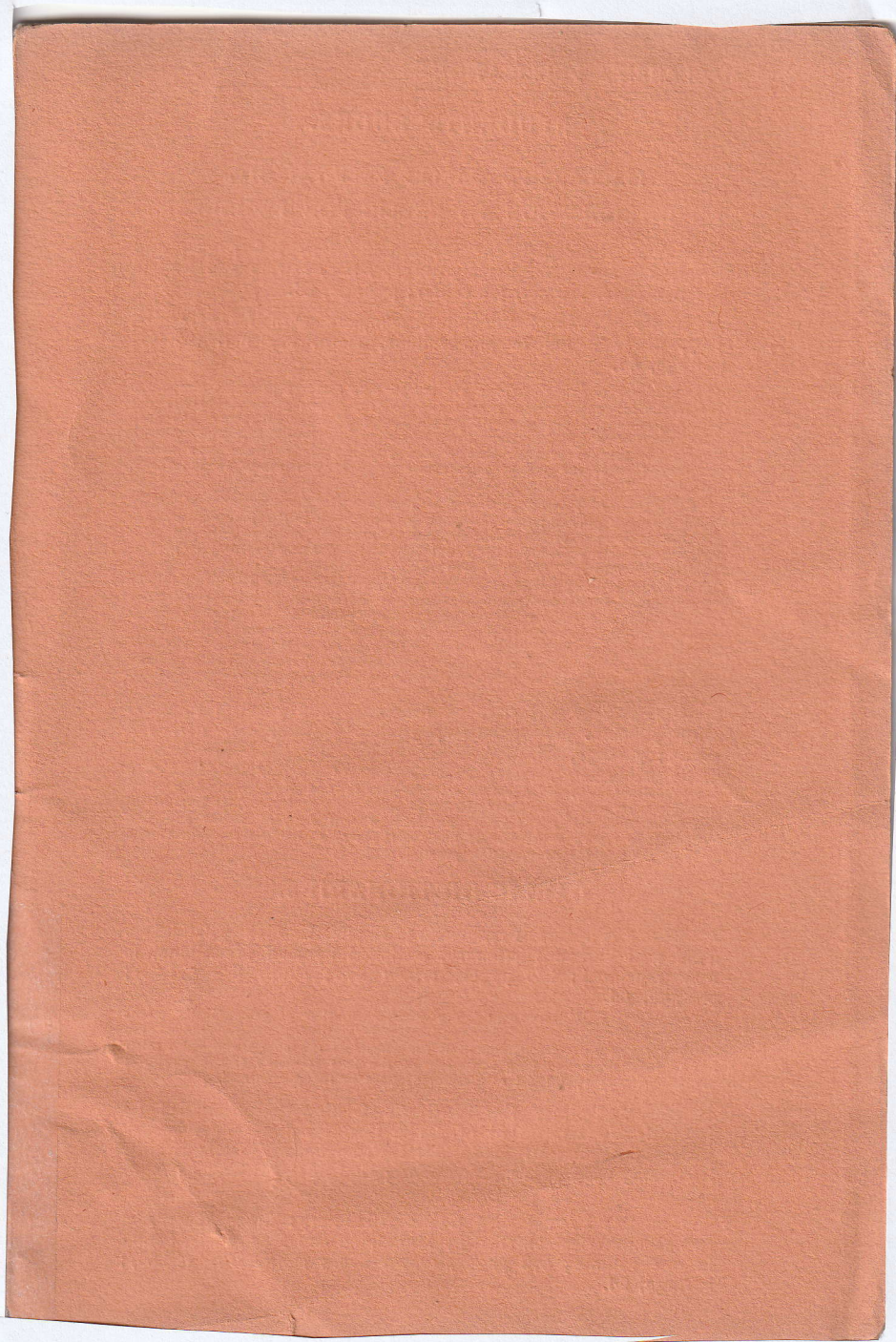
Is esan an duine :
Is ise a' chaileag :
B' esan an cù :

Nor may we say

| | | |
|--------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| Tha so an duine | (for) | <i>This is the man.</i> |
| Tha so a' chaileag | (for) | <i>This is the girl.</i> |
| Bha sin an cù | (for) | <i>That was the dog.</i> |

We must use **IS E** or **B' E**, viz. :

Is e so an duine :
Is i so a' chaileag :
B' e sin an cù



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| (a) Is e an loch a tha an so : | <i>It is the loch that is here.</i> |
| (b) Is e an cù mór a tha aig an dorus : | <i>It is the big dog that is at the door.</i> |
| (c) Is e an t-aran a tha air a' bhòrd : | <i>It is the bread that is on the table.</i> |
| (d) Is e am fiadh a tha anns a' bheinn : | <i>It is the deer that is on the hill.</i> |
| (e) Is i a' chraobh a tha anns a' ghàradh : | <i>It is the tree that is in the garden.</i> |
| (f) Is i a' bheinn a tha àrd : | <i>It is the hill that is high.</i> |
| (g) Is e an t-each a tha sgìth : | <i>It is the horse that is tired.</i> |
| (h) Is e am maide a tha briste : | <i>It is the stick that is broken.</i> |
| (i) Is e am bàta a tha a' seòladh : | <i>It is the boat that is sailing.</i> |
| (j) Is e an t-iasg a tha a' snàmh : | <i>It is the fish that is swimming.</i> |
| (k) Is iad na daoine a tha ag coiseachd : | <i>It is the men who are walking.</i> |

- (l) Is i a' ghrian a tha a' deàrrsadh : *It is the sun that is shining.*
- (m) Is fliuch an latha, or Is e latha fliuch a tha ann : *Wet is the day, or It is a wet day there is.*
- (n) Is e an t-uisge a tha ann : *It is the rain there is.*
- (o) Is i oidhche mhaith a tha innte, or *It is a good night,*
or
Is e oidhche mhaith a tha ann : *It is a good night which is present now.*
- (p) Is e deagh thide a tha ann : *It is good weather which is (present).*

The *past tense* of **IS** is **BU**, and the *past tense* of **IS E** is **B' E** (am b' e?; cha b' e; nach b' e?; . . . gum b' e; mur b' e).

Sentences beginning with **IS E** express direct emphasis on the subject, as distinct from any other possible article or thing.

Sentences beginning with **IS** followed by an adjective express emphasis on the adjective.

The preceding sentences thus indicate that

- (a) The *Loch* (and nothing else) is here.
- (b) The *Big Dog* (and nothing else) is at the door.
- (c) The *Bread* is on the table.
etc., etc.

Note.—There are naturally subtleties or nuances of inference according as to whether or not the **Article** is used before the subject.

Examples of question and answer with foregoing sentences :

- (a) An e so an loch? Is e : *Is this the loch? It is.*
An e loch domhain a tha an so? *Is it a deep loch that is here?*
Chan e—is e loch tana a tha ann : *It is not; it is a shallow loch.*
An e an loch a tha an so? *Is it the loch that is here?*
Chan e—is e an abhainn a tha ann : *It is not; it is the river that is in it (here).*

- (b) An e an cù mór a tha aig an doras? Chan e—is e an cù beag a tha ann : *Is it the big dog that is at the door? It is not; it is the small dog that is there.*
An e cù mór a tha ann? Is e : *Is it a big dog that is there? It is.*
An e so an cù mór? Chan e—is e so an cù beag : *Is this the big dog? It is not; this is the small dog.*
- (c) An e an t-aran a tha air a' bhòrd? Is e : *Is it the bread that is on the table. It is.*
An e aran a tha ann? Chan e—is e im a tha ann : *Is it bread which is there (in it)? It is not; it is butter which is there (in it).*
Nach e aran ùr a tha air a' bhòrd? Chan e—is e bonnach ùr a tha air a' bhòrd : *Isn't it new bread that is on the table? It is not; it is a new bannock that is on the table.*
etc., etc.

IS ANN.

Now we come to the third form of the verb **to be**.

Gaelic speakers use this form as often as they use **THA** and **IS E**, but for some inexplicable reason no Gaelic grammarian has clearly explained this usage, and the learner is left unaided to solve the difficulty. In ordinary Gaelic conversation, sentences more frequently begin with **IS ANN** (**an ann?**; **chan ann**; **nach ann?**; . . . **gur ann**; **mur ann**) than with any other words. The native Gaelic speaker who has not studied grammar is quite unaware of this form of speech, and yet it is no exaggeration to say that he *uses it in three sentences out of ten*.

This form of the verb **to be** is the crux of the Gaelic language. Let those who are learners master this form and progress becomes rapid; unmastered, "all the voyage of their life Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

This form is used :

(1) When **Locative** emphasis is desired :

- (a) Is ann an so a tha an loch : *It is here that the loch is.*
- (b) Is ann aig an doras a tha an cù mór : *It is at the door that the big dog is.*

- (c) Is ann air a' bhòrd a tha an t-aran : *It is on the table that the bread is.*
 (d) Is ann anns a' bheinn a tha am fiadh : *It is on the ben that the deer is.*
 (e) Is ann anns a' ghàradh a tha a' chraobh : *It is in the garden that the tree is.*

We note from the above examples :

- (a) That the Loch is **Here**, and nowhere else.
 (b) That the Big Dog is at the **Door**.
 He is not at the window, nor at the side of house nor any place but at the door.
 (c) That the Bread is on the **Table**.
 It is not in the cupboard nor on the floor nor in the crock—but quite definitely and obviously on the table.
 etc., etc.

(2) When **verbal** emphasis is desired :

- (f) Is ann a tha a' bheinn àrd : *It is high that the hill is ; or the hill is really high.*
 (g) Is ann a tha an t-each sgìth : *It is tired that the horse is.*
 (h) Is ann a tha am maide briste : *It is broken that the stick is*
 (i) Is ann a tha am bàta a' seòladh, *It is (really) sailing that the boat is.*
 or
 Is ann a' seòladh a tha am bàta :
 (j) Is ann a tha an t-iasg a' snàmh, *It is (really) swimming that the fish is.*
 or
 Is ann a' snàmh a tha an t-iasg :
 (k) Is ann a tha na daoine ag cois-eachd, *It is walking that the men are.*
 or
 Is ann ag coiseachd a tha na daoine :
 (l) Is ann a tha a' ghrian a' deàrrsadh, *The sun is (actually) shining.*
 or
 Is ann a' deàrrsadh a tha a' ghrian :
 (m) Is ann a tha an latha fliuch, *It is wet that the day is.*
 or
 Is ann a tha latha fliuch ann an diugh : *To-day is (really) wet.*
 (n) Is ann a tha an t-uisge air sgur : *It has stopped raining.*

- (o) Is ann a tha oidhche mhaith ann a nis : *It is (really) a good night now.*
 (p) Is ann a tha deagh thìde ann : *It is (really) good weather.*

These examples give the ideas of the facts stated being so in reality, in spite of any thoughts of the contrary or of something different being the case.

The *past tense* of this form is **B' ANN** (am b' ann ? ; cha b' ann ; nach b' ann ? ; . . . gum b' ann ; mur b' ann).

Further examples of the very frequent use of **IS ANN** :—

- An ann an dé a thàinig sibh ? Is *Was it yesterday that you came ? It was.*
 ann :
 An ann an raoir a chuala sibh an *Was it last night that you heard the news (story) ?*
 naidheachd ? Chan ann—is ann *It was not ; it was to-day that I heard it (her).*
 an diugh a chuala mi i :
 An ann còmhla ris an rìgh a bha *Was it along with the king that the prince was ? It was not ; it was along with the soldiers that he was.*
 am prionnsa ? Chan ann—Is *Is it going to Lewis that you are ? It is not ; it is going to Barra that I am.*
 ann còmhla ris na saighdearan a *Wasn't it from Harris that you came ? It was.*
 bha e :
 An ann a' dol do Leòdhas a tha *Wasn't it to Uist that he belonged ? It was not ; it was to Benbecula that he belonged.*
 sibh ? Chan ann—is ann a' dol *Did not Hector say that it is to Tiree that he belongs ? No—he said that it is to Coll that he belongs.*
 do Bharraigh a tha mi :
 Nach b' ann as na Hearadh a thàinig *Is it not in the tree that the thrush is ? No—it is on the rock that it is.*
 sibh ? B' ann :
 Nach b' ann do Uibhist a bhuineadh *Isn't it to the Island of Skye that Young James of the Isles belongs ? It is ; it is to Sleat that he belongs.*
 e ? Cha b' ann—b' ann do
 Bheinnabhaoghla a bhuineadh e :
 Nach d' thuirt Eachann gur ann *Is it not in the tree that the thrush is ? No—it is on the rock that it is.*
 do Thirithe a bhuineas e ? Cha *Isn't it to the Island of Skye that Young James of the Isles belongs ? It is ; it is to Sleat that he belongs.*
 d' thuirt—thubhairt e gur ann *Is it not in the tree that the thrush is ? No—it is on the rock that it is.*
 do Chollá a bhuineas e :
 Nach ann anns a' chraoibh a tha *Isn't it to the Island of Skye that Young James of the Isles belongs ? It is ; it is to Sleat that he belongs.*
 an smeorach ? Chan ann—is *Is it not in the tree that the thrush is ? No—it is on the rock that it is.*
 ann air a' chreig a tha i :
 Nach ann do an Eilean Sgitheanach *Isn't it to the Island of Skye that Young James of the Isles belongs ? It is ; it is to Sleat that he belongs.*
 a bhuineas Seumas Og nan Eilean ? Is ann—is ann do
 Shléibhte a bhuineas e :

An additional note of very special value to the learner.

Gaelic has several idiomatic forms which we must use if we wish to express the meaning of equivalent English forms.

In Gaelic we may **not** use or say

| | | |
|---------------|-------|-----------------------|
| Tha e duine | (for) | <i>He is a man.</i> |
| Tha i caileag | (for) | <i>She is a girl.</i> |
| Tha e cù | (for) | <i>It is a dog.</i> |

We must construct the sentence with the prepositional pronoun **ANN**, viz. :

| | | |
|-------------------|----|----------------------------|
| Tha e 'na dhuine | or | Is e duine a tha ann : |
| Tha i 'na caileig | or | Is i caileag a tha innte : |
| Tha e 'na chù | or | Is e cù a tha ann : |

or we may use this emphatic phrase

Is duine e :
Is caileag i :
Is cù e :

Nor may we say

| | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| Tha e an duine | (for) | <i>He is the man.</i> |
| Tha i a' chaileag | (for) | <i>She is the girl.</i> |
| Bha e an cù | (for) | <i>It was the dog.</i> |

We must use **IS** or **BU** with the emphatic form of the personal pronoun, viz. :

Is esan an duine :
Is ise a' chaileag :
B' esan an cù :

Nor may we say

| | | |
|--------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| Tha so an duine | (for) | <i>This is the man.</i> |
| Tha so a' chaileag | (for) | <i>This is the girl.</i> |
| Bha sin an cù | (for) | <i>That was the dog.</i> |

We must use **IS E** or **B' E**, viz. :

Is e so an duine :
Is i so a' chaileag :
B' e sin an cù